

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 12167

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV MT
SUBJECT: MALTESE DEVELOPMENTS

1. MFA DIRECTOR FOR WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS MANNO BROUGHT US UP TO DATE JUNE 30 ON ITALIAN VIEW OF MALTA DEVELOPMENTS. LATEST EVENT WAS JUNE 29 VISIT OF MALTESE MFA SECRETARY GENERAL ABELA, WHO URGED ITALIANS TO ENCOURAGE GERMANS TO RESPOND TO MINTOFF LETTER TO SCHMIDT AND TO GIVE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. ITALIANS TOLD ABELA THAT THEY FELT THEY HAD GONE LONG WAY TO MEET MALTESE DEMANDS: THEY HAD NEGOTIATED DRAFT NEUTRALITY GUARANTEE AND THEY ARE PREPARED TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC SUPPORT IN FORM OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS. THEY CANNOT FORCE OTHER COUNTRIES TO RESPOND, BUT THEY UNDERSTAND SCHMIDT RESPONSE WILL BE DELIVERED IN NEXT FEW DAYS.

2. ITALIAN REACTION WAS ALONG LINES OF ANDREOTTI'S RESPONSE (WHICH MANNO SHOWED US) TO MINTOFF LETTER. LETTER GOES THROUGH HISTORY OF GOI EFFORTS TO HELP MALTA AND ADDS THAT IF MALTESE WANT ITALIAN HELP IN APPROACHING OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES FOR AID, THEY
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SHOULD INFORM GOI OF RESULTS OF THEIR EFFORTS TO GET SUCH COMMITMENTS. FINALLY, IT REITERATES ITALIAN DESIRE TO BE HELPFUL, BUT SAYS THAT ITALY CAN ONLY MAKE COMMITMENTS FOR ITSELF, NOT FOR OTHER COUNTRIES.

3. MANNO SAID THAT NEXT STEP IS LIKELY TO BE MEETING OF EC-NIN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EXPERTS TO DISCUSS COORDINATED

RESPONSE TO MALTESE ECONOMIC DEMANDS. WEST GERMANS WOULD ORGANIZE MEETING BUT WOULD APPARENTLY PREFER TO HAVE IT HELD IN ROME SO AS NOT TO RAISE MALTESE HOPES ABOUT EXTENT OF FRG ACTIVITY ON THEIR BEHALF. WEST GERMANS ARE DETERMINED TO KEEP AID IN CONTEXT OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND BELIEVE THAT AS YEAR WEARS ON, MINTOFF WILL BEGIN TO RECOGNIZE THAT HE WILL HAVE TO TAKE WHAT HE CAN GET IN THE FORM HE CAN GET IT.

4. MEANWHILE, ITALIANS ARE TYRING TO KEEP MALTESE CALM. MANNO SAID THAT FOCUS OF ITALIAN-MALTESE CONSULTATIONS HAS SHIFTED TO ROME AS MALTESE ARE STILL GIVING DA RIN COLD SHOULDER. HE ADDED THAT DA RIN IS NOT LIKELY TO STAY ON IN VALLETTA FOR MANY MORE MONTHS, AND THAT AFTER HIS DEPARTURE THE ITALIANS WILL PROBABLY LEAVE A CHARGE D'AFFAIRES IN PLACE FOR A WHILE. FOR THIS REASON, ITALIANS ARE ANXIOUS TO HAVE WHOLE QUESTION OF NEUTRALITY GUARANTEE AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PACKAGE RESOLVED BEFORE DA RIN LEAVES. GARDNER

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